

Enhancing Nursing Students' Communication Using TeamSTEPPS to Improve Patient Safety

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Abstract : Improving healthcare safety necessitates examining current trends and beliefs about safety and devising strategies to improve. Errors in healthcare continue to increase and be experienced by patients, which is preventable and directly correlated to a breakdown in healthcare communication. TeamSTEPPS is an evidence-based process designed to improve the quality and safety of healthcare by improving communication and team processes. Communication is at the core of effective team collaboration and is vital for patient safety. TeamSTEPPS offers insights and strategies for improving communication and teamwork and reducing preventable errors to create a safer healthcare environment for patients. The academic, clinical, and educational environment for nursing students is vital in preparing them for professional practice by providing them with foundational knowledge and abilities. This environment provides them with a prime opportunity to learn about errors and the importance of effective communication to enhance patient safety, as nursing students are often unprepared to deal with errors. Proactively introducing and discussing errors through a supportive culture during the nursing student's academic beginnings has the potential to carry key concepts into practice to improve and enhance patient safety. TeamSTEPPS has been used globally and has collectively positively impacted improvements in patient safety and teamwork. A workshop study was introduced in winter 2023 of registered practical nurses (RPN) students bridging to the baccalaureate nursing program; the majority of the RPNs in the bridging program were actively employed in a variety of healthcare facilities during the semester. The workshop study did receive academic institution ethics board approval, and participants signed a consent form prior to participating in the study. The premise of the workshop was to introduce TeamSTEPPS and a variety of strategies to these students and have students keep a reflective journal to incorporate the presented communication strategies in their practicum setting and keep a reflective journal on the effect and outcomes of the strategies in the healthcare setting. Findings from the workshop study supported the objective of the project, resulting in students verbalizing notable improvements in team functioning in the healthcare environment resulting from the incorporation of enhanced communication strategies from TeamSTEPPS that they were introduced to in the workshop study. Implication for educational institutions is the potential of further advancing the safety literacy and abilities of nursing students in preparing them for entering the workforce and improving safety for patients.

Keywords : teamstepps, education, patient safety, communication

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